AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for performing device address assigning functionality in intelligent hardware, said method comprising:

receiving a network access request from an electronic device communicatively coupled to said intelligent hardware;

transmitting a device address request to a network server communicatively coupled to said intelligent hardware;

receiving a first device address from said network server communicatively coupled to said intelligent hardware; and

assigning a second device address to said electronic device communicatively coupled to said intelligent hardware;

wherein said intelligent hardware is wall-mountable and comprises a user-accessible surface such that a user is provided direct access to said intelligent hardware.

2. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1 wherein said intelligent hardware comprises:

a first interface for communicatively coupling said intelligent hardware to a network, said network comprising said network server;

a second interface for communicatively coupling said intelligent hardware to a plurality of said electronic devices such that each said electronic device is communicatively coupled to said network;

a processor coupled to said first interface and said second interface; and

a device address retriever coupled to said processor.

3. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1 wherein said first device address and said second device address are an IP addresses.

4. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1 wherein said network server comprises a DHCP server.

5. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1 wherein said first device address is the same as said second device address.

6. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1 wherein said first device address is a global device address.

7. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1 wherein said second device address is a private device address.

8. (Currently Amended) A method for performing device address assigning functionality in intelligent hardware, said method comprising:

receiving a network access request from an electronic device communicatively coupled to said intelligent hardware, said intelligent hardware

having a first device address, wherein said intelligent hardware is wall-mountable and comprises a user-accessible surface such that a user is provided direct access to said intelligent hardware; and

assigning a second device address to said electronic device communicatively coupled to said intelligent hardware, such that said intelligent hardware eliminates the need for a separate device address assigning server.

9. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said intelligent hardware comprises:

a first interface for communicatively coupling said intelligent hardware to a network;

a second interface for communicatively coupling said intelligent hardware to a plurality of said electronic devices such that each said electronic device is communicatively coupled to said network;

a processor coupled to said first interface and said second interface; and

a device address assignor coupled to said processor.

10. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said first device address and said second device address are IP addresses.

11. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 9 wherein said device address assignor is a DHCP server.

12. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said first device address is the same as said second device address.

13. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said first device address is a global device address.

14. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said second device address is a private device address.

15. (Currently Amended) An intelligent device for performing device address assigning functionality comprising:

a wall-mountable housing;

a first interface for communicatively coupling said intelligent device to a network;

a second interface for communicatively coupling said intelligent device to a plurality of electronic devices such that each said electronic device is communicatively coupled to said network, wherein said second interface is comprised within a user-accessible surface such that a user is provided direct access to said intelligent hardware;

a processor coupled to said first interface and said second interface; and

a device address retriever coupled to said processor for retrieving a first device address for said intelligent device from a network server of said network and for assigning a second device address to said electronic device;

wherein said first interface, said second interface, said processor and said device address retriever are comprised within said wall-mountable housing.

16. (Original) An intelligent device as recited in Claim 15 wherein said first device address and said second device address are IP addresses.

17. (Original) An intelligent device as recited in Claim 15 wherein said network server is a DHCP server.

18. (Original) An intelligent device as recited in Claim 15 wherein said first device address is the same as said second device address.

19. (Original) An intelligent device as recited in Claim 15 wherein said first device address is a global device address.

20. (Original) An intelligent device as recited in Claim 15 wherein said second device address is a private device address.

21. (Currently Amended) An intelligent device for performing device address assigning functionality, said intelligent device having a first device address, said intelligent device comprising:

a wall-mountable housing;

a first interface for communicatively coupling said intelligent device to a network;

a second interface for communicatively coupling said intelligent device to a plurality of electronic devices such that each said electronic device is communicatively coupled to said network, wherein said second interface is comprised within a user-accessible surface such that a user is provided direct access to said intelligent hardware;

a processor coupled to said first interface and said second interface; and

a device address assignor coupled to said processor for assigning a second device address to said electronic device;

wherein said first interface, said second interface, said processor and said device address assignor are comprised within said wall-mountable housing.

22. (Original) An intelligent device as recited in Claim 21 wherein said first device address and said second device address are IP addresses.

23. (Original) An intelligent device as recited in Claim 21 wherein said device address assignor is a DHCP server.

24. (Original) An intelligent device as recited in Claim 21 wherein said first device address is the same as said second device address.

25. (Original) An intelligent device as recited in Claim 21 wherein said first device address is a global device address.

26. (Original) An intelligent device as recited in Claim 21 wherein said second device address is a private device address.